

Wolf Pack volunteers time

Promotes goodwill between U.S. forces and the Republic of

***By Staff Sgt. Jung Murphy
8th Communications Squadron and the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs staff***

The 8th Fighter Wing rolled out the red carpet and provided a base tour for local orphanage children April 18.

Wolf Pack volunteers brought candy, drinks, and also recently arranged for the children to get a first-hand look at Kunsan military vehicles to include a HUMMV, police car, and fire truck. The orphans eagerly inspected the inside of the vehicles and even had a chance to spray water through the fire truck's fire hose. The children also received a K-9 military working dog demonstration.

The 8th FW participates in and hosts various civic outreach activities, such as the base tour and orphanage visits, for Kunsan City and its surrounding areas. For years, the Wolf Pack has adopted various orphanages and volunteered time to teach children English and organize various social activities.

One of the orphanages Wolf Pack volunteers visit each Thursday night is the Kae Chong Orphanage. Mr. Yi, Pyong Chin, a Central Texas University education counselor, and volunteers from the Wolf Pack have visited the orphanage for more than four years.

Each time they visit, children eagerly wait at the windows with smiles of excitement.

"What keeps me coming back is (the) unconditional love," said Staff Sgt. Traci Christman, 8th Fighter Wing Judge Advocate Office. "I feel content that I might have made a difference to one child just by putting a puzzle together or giving horseback rides."

The weekly visits usually consist of playing board games, putting together puzzles, coloring and various other activities. The older orphans are tutored in conversational English. The tutoring sessions help the children understand and learn English prior to taking the subject in high school.

Besides weekly visits, the Wolf Pack also sponsors special events such as holiday parties. Last year, the Wolf Pack donated more than 100 Christmas toys, introduced children to traditional American style meals and even arranged for a special appearance by Santa Claus.

A total of 34 orphans ranging in age from three-to 17-years-old, occupy the orphanage. Unfortunately, more orphans arrive than depart the Kae Chong Orphanage, making Wolf Pack volunteers always in demand.

Many volunteers visit the orphanage for different reasons. Some Wolf Pack members go because they miss their own children and some go to bring joy and happiness to others.

"Being connected with a child is something that my friends on base can't replace," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Littrell, 8th Maintenance Squadron. "Bringing a smile to a child's face and seeing them beam with delight makes volunteering my time all worthwhile."

Community involvement while serving overseas is important to Wolf Pack warriors.

"I believe it is every service members' responsibility to give back to whatever community they are stationed near," said Columbus. "I want to give these children a positive impression of the United States and Americans. I also want to bring a little bit of joy to their world."

Although volunteers go to the orphanage to share their time and give back to the local community, some actually get a return on their investment.

"I didn't initially volunteer to get something out of it for myself," said Staff Sgt. Craig Melton, 8th Communications Squadron. "However, the gratification that comes from (volunteering) is very rewarding."

"I especially enjoyed my first visit because it was the first time I experienced the group goodbye," said Master Sgt. Roxanne Columbus, 8th Civil Engineer Squadron. "It brought tears to my eyes."

At the end of each visit, the children line up outside and watch as the volunteers drive away. The orphans wave good-bye and say the few English words that they know, "Thank you, good-bye."

If you would like more information on the weekly orphanage trip to the Kae Chong Orphanage contact Senior Airmen Lanie McNeal, 782-4106; Alaina Frankenfield, 782-4508; Jennifer Walsh, 782-4508; Ariana Dahl, 782-5157.



Above left: Yi, Chong Chu tries on Staff Sgt. Stephen McMahon's, 8th Security Forces Squadron, beret. Above right: Staff Sgt. McMahon, 8th Civil Engineer Squadron, Fire Protection Crew Chief makes sure they don't get too carried away.